

PUBLIC ACCESS ROOM

A division of the Legislative Reference Bureau

N E W S L E T T E R

Hawaii State Capitol ♦ 415 South Beretania Street ♦ Room 401 ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 587-0478 ♦ Fax: (808) 587-0793 ♦ Email: par@capitol.hawaii.gov**Legislative Timetable**

January

19th Opening Day21st Non-Administrative Bill

Package Cutoff

24th State-of-the-State Address &

Administrative Bill Package

Cutoff

27th Last day for introduction of
bills31st Grants/Subsidies Cutoff

February

18th First Lateral21st Holiday - Presidents' Day24th - March 2nd Mandatory 5-

Day Recess

March

4th First Decking - last day to file
non-budget bills10th First Crossover16th Last day to introduce

substantive resolutions

22nd Budget Decking24th Budget Crossover/Second
Lateral25th Holiday - Kuhio Day &
Good Friday

April

8th Second Decking - last day to
file bills in non-originating body14th Second Crossover - last day
to disagree15th First Crossover for Concur-
rent Resolutions22nd Deadline for final form of
constitutional amendments25th Second Crossover for
Concurrent Resolutions28th Last day to file non-fiscal
bills to deck for Final Reading29th Last day to file fiscal bills to
deck for Final Reading

May

5th Adjournment Sine Die**CONTACT US:**

Public Access Room

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Maui:.....984-2400, then ext. 70478 70793

Kaua'i:.....274-3141, then ext. 70478 70793

Moloka'i/Lana'i: 800-468-4644, then ext. 70478 70793

**“You???”**

Back in the late eighties, I served on the board of an organization I liked a lot. While I was there, an issue arose in our community that we felt very strongly about. We decided to take our concerns to Washington. I was chosen to go. I was thrilled and horrified. What in the world had I gotten myself into?

I called my daughter on the mainland. She was at an age when one's parents' actions are frequently viewed with skepticism anyway.

“You're going to do *what*?”

I swallowed. She sounded just like me.

“I'm going to Washington to lobby our members of Congress.”

“My mother? A lobbyist? My mother?”

(Well, really now. It might be absurd, but not that absurd.)

“Well, yeah.”

“So what does a lobbyist do?”

I hadn't a clue, but I wasn't about to tell her that.

“They just talk to people, get them to feel the same way they do, and then do something about it.”

Well, yes and no. While basically true, it's certainly simplistic. It was a good starting place, though, and off I went, inexperienced, terrified, and excited.

Thankfully, before I left, I was taken under the wing of someone a lot more experienced than I, and who gave really good advice.

So what I lacked in experience, I made up for with solid knowledge, well-researched material, and good information about alternative approaches to solving our issue. That really helped. My friend also reminded me to laugh a lot, and to call when I had questions.

“Each one teach one.” (Thus taught the great Sequoia to his fellow Cherokee in urging literacy, a move that likely saved their nation's life.)

So. Know your issue. Suggest good alternatives to what you oppose. Read the bills carefully. Tell the truth and don't exaggerate. Drink more water. Get your testimony in on time. Take a walk now and then to get the kinks out of your neck and brain. Speak kindly and professionally to legislators and staff. Laugh. Convey your hope.

And call when you have questions. We're at 587-0478 and toll-free from the Neighbor Islands. If you email inquiries to par@capitol.hawaii.gov, include your phone number so we can call you with an answer if that's faster.

And when that incredulous phone call comes and you hear someone saying, “You? A lobbyist?” then go ahead and smile and say, “That's right.”

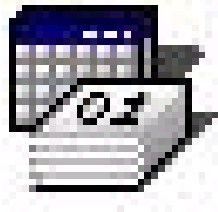


--Suzanne Marinelli, PAR Coordinator

“It’s an Odd Year” — Hawaii’s ‘Biennial’ Legislature

You may be hearing the phrase, “since it’s an odd year,” around the Capitol this month. Chances are this is not a comment on any particularly strange happenings in 2005, but points out that Hawaii is in the first year of its two-year or ‘biennial’ session. What does that mean, and why does it matter? And why is it called ‘biennial’ when session convenes every year?

It helps to know how we got here. In the days when Hawaii was a territory, legislative sessions were limited to sixty days and held biennially, i.e., convened every other year. In practice, however, if the legislature failed to appropriate funds for operating the government, the governor was required to convene “extra sessions” of the legislature and those sessions had no time limit.



Upon statehood in 1959, the legislature was mandated to convene annually. In even-numbered years, session was limited to thirty days, and only budget items were considered.

In 1968, the Hawaii Constitution was amended, and the legislature now convenes annually for regular sessions of sixty days and the legislature, as well as the governor, has the power to call for special sessions or to extend a session. Significantly, any bills pending at the final adjournment of an odd-numbered year are carried over with the same status to the next regular session. As a result, in even-numbered years (the second year of the biennial cycle), carried-over bills are part of the landscape at session’s start.

So, Hawaii’s legislature is still on a two-year ‘biennial’ cycle, even though it convenes annually. Since it’s an odd year, when the Twenty-Third Hawaii Legislature opens on January 19, 2005, the slate is clean, with no bills carried over from previous sessions. It’s important to keep in mind that measures introduced this year that do not pass into law or which have not been vetoed may still be considered viable, since they carry over to next year’s session and may be brought forward for action.

We’re in good company with our move to regular annual sessions, and most other states have done the same. Today, just six states still convene only every other year (Arkansas, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon and Texas). [Another six, while meeting annually, limit the scope of one year of their biennium (Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico, North Carolina and Wyoming).] The Federal system is biennial, with annual sessions — for example, the current 109th Congress convenes for their 1st session in 2005 and their 2nd session in 2006.

The good news is that when your favorite piece of legislation looks like it may not come out of committee before session’s end, remember, “it’s an odd year.” It can still be brought to life during next year’s session.

Need Quick Access to Helpful Information?

Take a few minutes now to save time and frustration later. At <http://www.state.hi.us/lrb/par/newsltr.html> you’ll find quick links to helpful articles that have appeared in past issues of the Public Access Room newsletter. Everything from “How to Register as a Lobbyist” to tips on using the Capitol web site. And there’s a lot of good information on the legislative process.

So, take a moment and take a look. Better yet, add us to your list of bookmarked Internet sites. We may be just the ticket when colleagues or constituents find themselves a bit confused – and you’ll be the one with quick access to some easy-to-understand answers.

Resignation from Political Office

When opportunity comes knocking, you must decide whether or not you will answer the call. It is a decision that is contemplated by individuals in both the private sector and in public office. In the private sector, if you decide to resign from your position, it is up to the employer either to fill that position or leave it vacant, but not so for an elected public official.

Before the start of the 23rd Legislative Session, one Representative heard that call, and he answered. Maui Representative Sol Kaho`ohalahala of the 13th House district resigned from office on January 9, 2005, to become the new executive director of the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission.

Due to Rep. Kaho`ohalahala's resignation, there is now a vacancy in the Legislature that needs to be filled. Here is what Section 17-4 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes says about this process:

Whenever any vacancy in the membership of the state house of representatives occurs, the governor shall make an appointment within sixty calendar days following the first day of vacancy to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term and the appointee shall be of the same political party or nonpartisanship as the person the appointee succeeds.

A preliminary screening panel is currently working to compile a list of potential candidates for the Governor's review. Each member of that panel may select up to six candidates. When that is completed, a separate 3-member panel will then conduct interviews of the candidates. Once the interviews are complete, the Governor will be presented with three finalists from whom she will make her choice.

Governor Lingle has indicated that she intends to appoint a successor to Rep. Kaho`ohalahala no later than February 7, 2005.

We wish Rep. Kaho`ohalahala well, and look forward to working with the new Representative.

PAR WORKSHOPS

The Public Access Room of the Hawaii State Legislature hosts a series of workshops for the public on a number of topics that pertain to the legislature. Listed below are the workshops that are available. If you are interested in attending any of the scheduled workshops, please contact the Public Access Room at 587-0478. The workshops will be held in the Public Access Room (room 401 in the State Capitol) and seating is limited so sign up soon.

Legislative Process – Learn about the Legislative Timetable, Deadlines, Readings, Conference Procedures, and internal rules of the House and Senate.

Useful Internet Sites – Learn about the research tools available on-line including the legislature's website and the State government website.

Reading and Understanding Legislative Documents – Learn how to read and understand legislative documents including Orders of the Day, Hearing Notices, Bills and Resolutions, Referral Sheets, Journals and Governor's Messages.

Workshop Schedule

| | | |
|------------|-----------|---------|
| Jan 20 Th | Process | 5:00 pm |
| Jan 25 Tu | Internet | 1:00 pm |
| Jan 26 Wed | Documents | 5:00 pm |
| Jan 27 Th | Internet | 1:00 pm |
| Feb 1 Tu | Process | 1:00 pm |
| Feb 3 Th | Internet | 5:00 pm |
| Feb 8 Tu | Documents | 1:00 pm |
| Feb 10 Th | Process | 5:00 pm |
| Feb 15 Tu | Documents | 1:00 pm |
| Feb 17 Th | Process | 5:00 pm |
| Feb 22 Tu | Internet | 1:00 pm |
| Feb 24 Th | Documents | 5:00 pm |

Please come to our **Opening Day reception**. We'll have modest pupus, good information, outrageous conversation, and our still-not-quite-famous festival punch.

When: January 19, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Where: State Capitol Room 401

Join us as old friends, and come meet some new ones. We look forward to seeing each and every one of you, on Opening Day and throughout the year.

Admit One

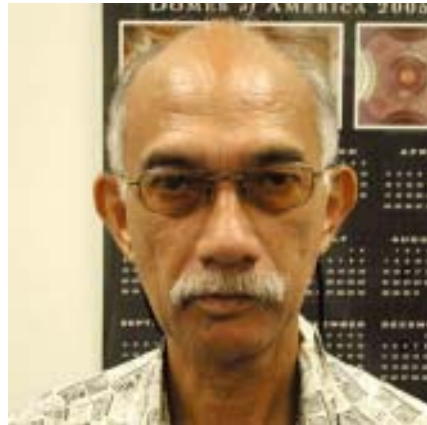
Meet the PAR Staff



Robbie Watland has returned, once again, to the legislature, but in a whole new capacity. He has worked the last 4 sessions – 2 sessions as a legislative aide for Senator Matt Matsunaga and 2 sessions as a committee clerk for Representative Robert Herkes – and is now the PAR's Assistant Coordinator. Robbie had some fairly big shoes to fill when his predecessor, Shane Peters, left to pursue other callings, but seems to be absorbing all that the PAR has to offer. To escape the legislative world, Robbie moonlights as a drummer for 2 rock bands: Slug and Buddhist Priest. He looks forward to working with all of you during the upcoming session.



Virginia Beck is a 'survivor' of last year's legislative session. She enjoys working at the Capitol, and learning more about public process and citizen participation. Virginia has a Masters Degree in Public Administration. Her work experience includes a variety of other public and non-profit organizations. She is still learning about how things work here in her adopted state — she moved to Hawaii seven years ago from Mississippi, after living most of her adult life in California. When away from work, Virginia enjoys expanding her horizons by reading, hiking Oahu's beautiful trails, and traveling to new destinations.



"Life-long learning" has been **Larry Ka'aloehukai Kamakawiwo'ole's** motto from day one. Whether as a student at Kamehameha in the 50's, a seminarian in Berkeley in the 60's, a backpacker traveling around the world and a teacher of English at a college in Japan in the 70's, a law student in Washington, D.C. in the 80's, an attorney in Honolulu in the 90's, and returning as a legislative researcher at PAR for the 2005 legislative session, Larry has integrated his learning experiences to better the community around him. Please visit PAR the next time you are at the Capitol. We are here to assist you in making a better Hawaii.



"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all...." * **Ruth Uemura** joins PAR with a diverse background in the fields of graphic arts, publishing, healing arts, and environmental resources. A resident of Honolulu for 35 years, she has traveled to India, Israel, Europe, Canada, and many states of the mainland U.S. Ruth studies nutrition, enjoys creating new recipes, practices yoga, swims in the ocean as often as possible, walks in the mountains, supports the arts in Hawaii, and is always looking for a new adventure. Assisting the public to influence legislative change may qualify. (*Helen Keller)